

The book's cover title was *A Premier's Voyage to the South Sea Islands in Search of Health*. Within, the title page repeated this title and named Edward Tregear as the author (Plate I).

As soon as Seddon saw it, after only a few copies had been released, he had it immediately recalled. He left the text unchanged but insisted that the book be recovered and retitled, that Tregear's name as author be deleted, and that many of the photographs be removed.

The new version was eventually released in 1901. The cover now read simply, *Rt. Hon R. J. Seddon's Visit to the South Sea Islands*. The book's altered title page gave no reference to the author (Plate II).

That Seddon should want to change the original title is not surprising. Presumably any reference to his ill health belied his robust image. But his insistence that Tregear not be acknowledged as author hints at Seddon's more personal quirks. As Tregear wrote:

By the fiat of 'One who must be obeyed' my name has been erased . . . You know how the *kauri* grows? Nothing but lowly grass fill the acres of its shadow. I have learnt some unwilling lessons lately and paraphrase an old saying. 'No Premier is a hero to his Under-Secretary'.²

Tregear's wife, Bessie, explained to their daughter that Tregear's name was omitted because of 'something to do with his being "a civil servant"'.³

Seddon's censorship was not generally known, and apparently very few original copies were in circulation. Tregear must have kept uncharacteristically quiet about the matter. Neither the original nor the censored version appeared in Hocken's bibliography of 1909. Johnstone's 1927 supplement to Hocken's bibliography listed the censored version in his 1900 section under 'Seddon' in a manner which suggested that Seddon was the author.⁴ Johannes Andersen, who knew Tregear well and shared similar interests in Polynesian culture, and who became Librarian of the Alexander Turnbull Library in 1918, was apparently unaware of the censored book's troubled history or even that Tregear had written it. In 1936 Tregear's daughter Vera Robinson informed Andersen, still the Turnbull Librarian, of the existence of the suppressed version written by her father, a copy of which she and her mother each possessed. She wrote a card formally claiming Tregear's authorship of the anonymous version:

I hereby certify that the book of travels, called "The Visit of Hon. R. J. Seddon to the South Sea Islands", was written and edited by my Father, the late Mr. Edward Tregear.

Signed, Vera Robinson.
(Daughter.)⁵

Andersen was delighted with this information:

There's a rarity in this official publication where you would never look for rarity! . . . There are two copies extant at least; but as they [Tregear's wife and daughter]